

Chairman Cirino, Vice Chair Rulli, Ranking Member Ingram, and members of the Senate Workforce and Higher Education Committee.

Thank you for allowing me to submit written testimony. My name is Addison Caruso. I am currently an environmental attorney and Postdoctoral fellow at Case Western Reserve University Law School's Environmental Law Clinic. I am strongly opposed to Senate Bill 83 and its companion bill in the Ohio House.

As a fellow, I help instruct students every day about the current state of environmental law and supervise their work. I worry that this bill, and others like it that prohibit the discussion of "divisive concepts," will negatively affect the work that I, and other academics like me, do every day. If I cannot discuss divisive concepts, like climate change, we will not be able to complete clinical work and train the next generation of lawyers and leaders in Ohio. In law school, you are trained to question and challenge topics, by shying away from concepts that may be "divisive," it devalues the legal education and harms students. In the classroom, the director and I love to present novel and sometimes controversial topics, to get the student's feedback and push them to think about issues more deeply. This bill "chills" that discussion as instructors constantly worry about running afoul of the law and shy away from discussing those topics and students miss out on that intellectual challenge. Even at a private school like Case, given the broad and vague nature of the bill's language, it would still stop discussion of certain topics.

If law schools, and other institutions, cannot discuss divisive concepts and challenge students to think critically, students will also choose to attend schools in other states and may not return to Ohio. In our world, the true competition is for talent, and to get the best and the brightest, Ohio must have an education system that nurtures the best and the brightest. This bill does the opposite and harms our educational system and chills discussion in the classroom.

I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on this dangerous bill.

Thank you.

Addison Caruso